

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 RABAT 03059 031620Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ORM-02 DHA-02 /085 W  
-----040316Z 056089 /64

R 031525Z JUN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2101  
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 3059

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PFOR, SS, MO  
SUBJECT: MOROCCAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S CONCERN OVER US PRESS ARTICLES  
ON SAHARA

REF RABAT 3039 (NOTAL)

1. FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI TELEPHONED AMBASSADOR ON MAY 31 TO EXPRESS CONCERN OVER MAY 29 AND 30 WASHINGTON POST ARTICLES ON SAHARA ISSUE, AND SUBSEQUENTLY GAVE US A COPY OF MESSAGE FROM MOROCCAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, WHICH REFERRED TO A TWO-PART REPORT BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT (UNNAMED) WHO HAD VISITED EL AYOUN UNDER MOROCCAN AUSPICES AND HAD ALSO ACCOMPANIED POLISARIO ELEMENTS INTO THE SAHARA. MOROCCAN EMBASSY SAW IT AS FAVORABLE TO ADVERSARIES OF MOROCCO, AND RECALLED THE WASHINGTON POST HAD REFUSED TO PUBLISH OFFICIAL MOROCCAN DENIAL APRIL 17 OF ALLEGATIONS OF WASHINGTON POST REPORTER INVLAIRE ON MISCONDUCT OF MOROCCAN TROOPS THERE.

2. JOSEPH FITCHETT ARTICLE DATESLINED ALGIERS AND PUBLISHED MAY 29 MOST CONCERNED LARAKI. HE NOTED IN PARTICULAR FITCHETT'S  
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MENTION OF VISIT TO ALGERIA BY "FIRST AMERICAN MILITARY MISSION SINCE MANY YEARS," AND ESTIMATES THT "AMERICAN INVESTMENT" IN ALGERIA AMOUNTED TO \$8 BILLION. LARAKI ALSO POINTED TO FITCHETT ASSERTION THAT US STUDYING POSSIBILITY OF SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO SAHARA REFUGEES (REFTTEL). LARAKI WONDERED RHETORICALLY WHETHER THERE WERE SIGNS OF CHANGE OF AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD MOROCCO AND ALGERIA.

3. IN FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION JUNE 1, AMBASSADOR GAVE LARAKI COPY OF BRIEF ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORT OF MOROCCAN DENIAL OF ATROCITIES IN ZAIRE PUBLISHED IN PARIS HERALD TRIBUNE APRIL 18, NOTING THAT WHILE HERALD TRIBUNE WAS INDEPENDENT PAPER, IT ONE-THIRD OWNED BY WASHINGTON POST. LARAKI EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THIS ITEM, WHICH HE HAD NOT SEEN. AS HE HAD DONE PREVIOUS DAY, HE AGAIN DEPLORED THE WASHINGTON POST'S ALLEGED REFUSAL OF MOROCCAN EMBASSY'S REQUEST THAT IT PUBLISH GOM'S DENIAL, CITING MOROCCAN LAW THAT ANY EMBASSY IN RABAT HAD LEGAL RIGHT TO HAVE PUBLICATION OF A CORRECTION IN SAME PLACE ORIGINAL STORY HAD APPEARED. HE THOUGHT POST SHOULD HAVE HAD "DECENCY" TO PUBLISH DENIAL EVEN IN ABSENCE OF ITS LEGAL OBLIGATION.

4. HAVING CHECKED WITH EMBASSY ALGIERS BY TELEPHONE, AMBASSADOR ATHEN EXPLAINED THAT US HAD NO DIRECT INVESTMENTS IN ALGERIA, BUT RATHER PRIMARILY SERVICE CONTRACTS. SUM INVOLVED WAS CLOSER TO \$5-6 BILLION THAN THE \$8 BILLION CITED IN FITCHETT PIECE. AMBASSADOR ALSO INFORMED LARAKI THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO AMERICAN "MILITARY MISSION" TO ALGERIA, BUT ONLY RECENT VISIT OF STUDENTS FROM NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE, WHO HAD ALSO COME TO MOROCCO. LARAKI WAS RELIEVED TO HEAR SECOND POINT, AND ENDED THIS PART OF THE CONVERSATION BY WONDERING HOW SUCH AN IMPORTANT AND ALLEGEDLY REPUTABLE PAPER AS THE WASHINGTON POST COULD PERMIT SUCH INACCURATE REPORTING.

5. FOR NEA/AFN - WOULD APPRECIATE TEXTS OF AFOREMENTIONED ARTICLES.

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## Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld  
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